

How to care for your new cat

Congratulations on your new cat! A new cat is an exciting addition to the family. That said, the first days or even weeks with a new pet is a big adjustment period. Make sure you have a bed, litter box and food ready before you bring him/her home. This guide will help you with what to expect and will share information and tips on how to make the adjustment a smooth one for you and your new family member!



Health

- Your cat will require vaccinations annually. Confirm what vaccinations your cat has had before bringing him/her home and schedule an appointment for any upcoming vaccinations that are due.
- It is extremely important to neuter or spay your cat before he or s/he becomes sexually mature (at approximately 5- 6 months old). This will help you avoid challenging behaviour, e.g. territorial spraying, yowling, scratching, running away as well as unwanted litters and the risk of certain cancers.
- It is important to take any signs of illness seriously and act quickly. If s/he develops diarrhoea or vomiting, immediately call the clinic. You should also seek immediate veterinary advice if s/he doesn't eat for more than 24 hours.
- Establish and maintain a strict de-worming, flea care and tick management routine. De-worming for your cat can be done every 3 months. Most flea and tick management are applied topically or orally on a monthly basis. Speak to the vet about the options available.

Food

- NEVER give your cat cow's milk, as s/he will be unable to digest it properly and it can make him/her unwell. Ensure fresh water is always available.
- If you want to use pellets and sachets, only use the one specified for cats.
- If you want to cook for your cat, you can try fish without bones or lean minced meat such as chicken. Boil the food without salt and add some finely diced green vegetables or carrots.
- Feed your cat two meals per day.
- Certain foods are toxic to cats, such as chocolate, onion, garlic, grapes and coffee.



Behaviour

- Introduce boundaries straight away. For example, if you do not want your cat to go on your kitchen countertops enforce this from the start as it will confuse him/her if you change this later on.
- Provide your cat with a litter box. If it is not possible to use proper cat litter, sand can be used instead. Clean out the box regularly so your cat wants to use it. Cats will generally use litter boxes by instinct, however you can help by showing her where it is when you first bring him/her home. Make sure the litter box is always available to your cat.
- Never hit or shout at your cat, instead reward positive behaviour with treats and praise.
- To prevent your cat running away, introduce him/her to the outside world slowly and carefully, generally after he/she has had at least 10 days to adjust to their new home. You can accompany them out for their few trips into the garden, bringing them back after they've had a little while to explore. You can also spread some of your cats' litter around your garden or compound to help your cat recognise your house as home.
- Introduce your cat to other animals in the house slowly and carefully supervise initial contact.
- Your cat may be anxious at first, this is completely normal. Give him/her plenty of time and space to adjust to the new environment. Keep things calm and relaxed, and within a few weeks or months he/she will settle in.
- Some cats, particularly younger cats, like to play. Simple toys include ping-pong balls and string. Don't be surprised if it takes him/her a while to get used to playing, it will probably be new to them.

